

SBA Disaster Assistance Approved for Walker & Surrounding Counties

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Wednesday announced that Walker and surrounding counties have now been approved for disaster assistance in the form of low-interest rate loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration. The approval is based on continued damage assessments from a line of severe storms that moved through Alabama on March 18.

“The March 18th storms caused a lot of damage in several communities, and this assistance from the SBA will help more people recover and rebuild,” Governor Bentley said. “The SBA and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency are working closely with affected communities across the state. We will continue to connect people with all available resources.”

Walker County is the primary county listed in a new SBA disaster declaration approved Tuesday afternoon. The declaration **also** covers counties that are contiguous to Walker County. Those counties are Blount, Cullman, Fayette, Jefferson, Marion, Tuscaloosa and Winston.

Earlier this month, the SBA issued a similar disaster declaration covering DeKalb, Etowah and surrounding counties in Alabama and Georgia based on damages from the same line of storms. In Alabama, those surrounding counties are Blount, Calhoun, Cherokee, Jackson, Marshall and St. Clair.

In all counties covered by these SBA disaster declarations, homeowners, renters, businesses and nonprofit organizations that qualify will have the following options from the SBA:

Home Disaster Loans:

- Renters and homeowners alike may borrow up to \$40,000 to repair or replace clothing, furniture, cars, appliances, etc., damaged or destroyed in the storms.
- Homeowners may apply for up to \$200,000 to repair or replace their primary residence to its pre-disaster condition.

Business Physical Disaster Loans:

- Loans of up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged property owned by the business, including real estate, inventories, supplies, machinery and equipment.
- Businesses of any size are eligible. Private, nonprofit organizations such as charities, churches, private universities, etc., are also eligible.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans:

- If a small business or private, nonprofit organization has suffered economic injury, regardless of physical damage, and is located in an SBA-declared disaster area, they may be eligible for financial assistance of up to \$2 million from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Those interested in applying for SBA low-interest rate loans can receive more information by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (or 800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing). Additional information, including SBA disaster loan fact sheets, can be found on the SBA's website at www.sba.gov.

"It is important for families still recovering to know this new declaration reaches beyond county lines and includes the seven counties that are contiguous to Walker County," Alabama EMA Director Art Faulkner said.

Serve Alabama, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Volunteer Service, continues to encourage storm survivors in need of assistance to call 211 (or 888-421-1266). Operators can give callers more information on recovery resources available in various communities.

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The Governor's Press Office can be reached at 334-242-7150.